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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE PROGRAMME OF THE UNITED NATIONS
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

Forty-fifth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 489th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 3 October 1994, at 10 a.m.

Temporary Chairman: Mr. BODDENS-HOSANG (Netherlands)

Chairman: Mr. KAMAL (Pakistan)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION (agenda item 1)

1. The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN declared open the forty-fifth session of the Executive Committee.

STATEMENT BY THE OUTGOING CHAIRMAN

2. The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN, speaking as outgoing Chairman of the forty-fourth session, welcomed the participants, in particular the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, whose presence on the rostrum was an example of the interinstitutional cooperation to which the Executive Committee attached great importance, and the Spanish delegation, which was taking part for the first time as a full member of the Executive Committee.

3. He stressed in that connection that the admission of a country to membership of the Executive Committee was a lengthy process and that he was convinced that the other countries which had expressed the wish would become members in 1995. The number of members of the Executive Committee was not fixed, so that donors and recipient countries interested in the future of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and concerned to find solutions to refugee problems were able to play their full role in policy-making.

4. The States Members of the United Nations or its specialized agencies which were not members of the Executive Committee but were clearly concerned about refugee issues and had asked to be accorded observer status had for years been authorized to participate in all the meetings, formal or informal, of the Executive Committee and its subcommittees: in practice, the rights of members and of observers were virtually identical. Since many new members had joined the Executive Committee in recent years, the question was one which should be reexamined in due course.

5. Reviewing his year in office, he said that he had been greatly impressed by the dedication which the members of the Executive Committee had shown in their concern to preserve the humanitarian spirit of its work. Over the years the Executive Committee had established a remarkable set of internationally accepted standards and principles on the protection of refugees and other persons whose situation raised issues of a humanitarian nature. Both the current and the new members would no doubt continue that work.

6. However, he had come to question the justification of the present organization of the Committee's sessions, a topic which might be the subject of informal consultations in the future. The Committee's agenda consisted essentially of a three-day general debate during which ministers and heads of delegation were invited to state the views of their country on various aspects of the refugee problem.

7. At the end of the week of work the Executive Committee approved by consensus the decisions reached after long negotiations in the group of friends of the Rapporteur, decisions which were therefore not based on the substantive debate in the Executive Committee itself. The bulk of the preparatory work was of course done in the two subcommittees before the opening of the Executive

Committee's session, but it would soon be necessary to give further thought to the question of whether the present arrangement was the best suited to the needs and expectations both of UNHCR and of countries, or whether on the contrary it might be possible to envisage arrangements to ensure a richer dialogue in plenary meetings concerning certain specific issues which warranted greater attention.

8. The current year had been a difficult one for UNHCR, owing in particular to the developments in the situation in Rwanda which had forced the Office to make its latest retrenchments, both at headquarters and in the field. Rwanda was the latest in a very large number of other hot points requiring constant attention and action throughout the world. Only profound admiration could be felt for the High Commissioner and her colleagues, many of whom had often had to work in conditions of extreme hardship side by side with members of other bodies and the ever active NGO workers.

9. He noted that, unfortunately, the number of refugees and displaced persons requesting assistance and protection over the past year had been higher than in the previous year. UNHCR had nevertheless managed to cope with the situation and had reacted with a speed and ingenuity for which, on behalf of the Executive Committee, he wished to congratulate the High Commissioner and all her colleagues. The year spent as Chairman of the Executive Committee had enabled him to gain an increasing awareness of the dedication of the whole staff of UNHCR to the cause of refugees throughout the world.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS (agenda item 2)

10. The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN invited the members of the Executive Committee to make nominations to the post of chairman.

11. Mr. KULLAVANIJAYA (Thailand) nominated Mr. Kamal (Pakistan).

12. Mr. LANG (Austria), Mr. SKOGMO (Norway) and Mr. JIN Yongjian (China) seconded the nomination.

13. Mr. Kamal (Pakistan) was elected Chairman by acclamation.

14. The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN invited the members of the Committee to make nominations to the post of vice-chairman.

15. Mr. JELONEK (Germany), on behalf of the European Union, Austria, Finland, Norway and Sweden, nominated Mr. Larsen (Denmark).

16. Mrs. BAUTISTA (Philippines) and Mr. SEVILLA SIERO (Nicaragua) seconded the nomination.

17. Mr. Larsen (Denmark) was elected vice-chairman by acclamation.

18. The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN invited the members of the Committee to make nominations to the post of rapporteur.

19. Mr. FASEHUN (Nigeria) nominated Mr. MANGACHI (United Republic of Tanzania).

20. Mr. WILLIAMS (United Kingdom) seconded the nomination.

21. Mr. Mangachi (United Republic of Tanzania) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.

22. Mr. Kamal (Pakistan) took the Chair.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

23. At the invitation of the Chairman, the members of the Executive Committee observed a minute of silence in tribute to the members of UNHCR and the many other field workers who had sacrificed their lives in the performance of their duties over the past year.

24. The CHAIRMAN said that the Executive Committee was meeting at a time when the new world order was still going through its birth pangs and that the challenge facing the Committee was one of adjustment, a topic on which he wished to share some ideas. First and foremost, the need was for more effective prevention. The ending of the cold war had initiated a new phase in the history of mankind which had given birth to the hope that freedom, democracy and human rights would flourish and find universal reflection in the conduct of States. Sadly, the events of the past few years had dampened the dream of a new and more humane era. The disappearance of bipolarity had in fact unleashed repressed discord and conflict. The result of such changes on the international stage had been a dramatic increase in the number of refugees and displaced persons.

25. Three categories of person were at present sources of particular concern: the victims of internal conflicts, whether refugees or displaced persons, the only distinction between the two being that some were able to cross national borders while others could not; persons who were actual or potential victims of the situation prevailing in the newly independent States or States which had recently emerged from a long period of authoritarian rule; and persons from developing countries who, in their flight from inhuman poverty or socio-political instability, were forced to leave their homes by whatever means available. Each of those categories had its specific characteristics and called for a distinct approach. However, in all cases prevention was obviously better than cure. The enlightened self-interest of the international community lay in addressing the root causes rather than in mitigating man-made disasters only after they had struck in full force.

26. The massive tragedy of Rwanda, which took on new dimensions almost every day, was the most blatant example of failure to address root causes at the national, regional or international level. When in the early 1960s UNHCR had established in Bujumbura its first regional office in Africa, it had dealt mainly with the problem of Hutus and Tutsis. Over three decades later UNHCR and the international community were grappling with the same problem.

27. New refugee problems or the perpetuation of old ones were a clear indictment of the political inaction of the international community. A refugee was the helpless victim of the breakdown of the social contract and latent evidence of a political or diplomatic failure at the regional or international level. The inextricable links between development aid and humanitarian assistance constituted another dimension of prevention. It was axiomatic that economic difficulties led to social unrest which in turn generated political

upheavals leading to violence and the displacement of populations which further aggravated the economic problems. That vicious circle could be broken only if economic development strategies were adjusted and tuned to prevention.

28. With a view to prevention it would therefore be useful to identify points of tension or areas of potential conflict at the regional or global level. The Governments concerned, the regional mechanisms and the donor community should then work in unison to adjust their development priorities so that greater attention was paid to areas of potential social unrest. A "containment strategy" which could help to avert new flows of refugees and displaced persons could thus be sketched out and implemented in a timely manner.

29. The second idea was that of a regional approach. The Charter of the United Nations emphasized regional cooperation and recommended a regional approach to the settlement of problems. In recent years, regional organizations had tended to play an increasingly important role in some places. The situation in the former Yugoslavia was one example, though not a very encouraging one.

30. While it was true that it was not for the Office to initiate or promote political action, given the purely humanitarian and non-political character of its mandate, it was equally true that political inaction or failure to act in a timely and effective manner had direct repercussions on and implications for its work. UNHCR had a vested interest in peace and security. Increasingly often, humanitarian action was tending to precede political action. Humanitarian aid was used to buy time to seek solutions which should have been sought before the tragedy had occurred. It was difficult to accept that the world should awake to a problem only when large-scale suffering had become a reality and the media had brought that suffering into people's homes.

31. The third idea was that of the development continuum. Emergency aid now dominated humanitarian action. The High Commissioner's "special programmes" required almost twice as much financial and human resources as the "general programmes". The ever growing scale of man-made disasters was becoming an intolerable strain on the aid budgets of donors. It was time to bring some innovative thinking to what the General Assembly had called "averting new flows of refugees". But an equitable relationship must also be established between humanitarian aid and development aid. The parameters of the continuum from relief to development needed to be clearly defined.

32. It was incumbent upon the international community to provide the High Commissioner not only with the material means to take on the new challenges but also with the conceptual wherewithal to strengthen the Office. Confronted with the growing masses of refugees and displaced persons, the pragmatic responses of UNHCR should be seen not as a series of ad hoc reactions but recognized by the community of nations as part and parcel of the institutional framework and accepted as the High Commissioner's mandatory duty. That should not require sweeping changes in the relevant international legal instruments.

33. The fourth idea concerned the role of NGOs. Most of the UNHCR programmes were implemented through NGOs, whose importance could not be overemphasized. At the recent conference held in Norway to strengthen the "partnership in action", or PARinNAC, the High Commissioner had rightly pointed out in her introduction to the Oslo Plan of Action that the success of the joint efforts of UNHCR and the NGOs required that Governments, development agencies, human rights networks,

and peace-keeping and conflict resolution mechanisms should all be involved in finding innovative approaches and establishing the necessary collaboration to put an end to conflicts and their accompanying displacements.

34. The fifth idea concerned the problem of statelessness, for which the High Commissioner had been given a clear mandate in the resolution adopted by the General Assembly in implementation of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. The emergence of newly independent States had in fact aggravated the persistent problems of ethnic minorities, disputed borders, and conflicts of laws, and indeed by the de facto problem of statelessness itself. Accordingly, a comprehensive study of the problem and a global plan of action would be timely and desirable. In particular, the newly independent States should be provided with assistance and technical advice to enable them to take timely action to prevent or mitigate the problem.

35. The sixth idea was the need for decentralization. The exponential increase in the tasks and responsibilities assigned to the High Commissioner had resulted in a corresponding inflation of the Office's budget. The cost of the programme submitted to the Executive Committee exceeded a billion dollars. In view of the volume of work and human resources needed to administer and manage a budget of that magnitude, the High Commissioner might perhaps have to adjust some of the Office's administrative and financial practices. Hitherto, UNHCR had worked in a highly centralized manner, with the headquarters services carrying the burden of most of the administrative and financial work. If the situation was to be improved, a degree of decentralization seemed inevitable. The High Commissioner was of course the best judge of what the scale and scope of such decentralization should be. But the Executive Committee should stand ready to provide whatever assistance or advice she might need in order to adjust UNHCR to the challenge of new situations and realities.

36. In an era of transparency, it was important for donors and the international community to have ready and easy access to all the information which they might need. For that purpose, UNHCR must make greater use of modern technology, including computer technology, and new methods of budgeting, financing and management; that would not only facilitate its work but also contribute to stronger relations between headquarters and the field.

37. Finally, the seventh idea was that in order to help the High Commissioner to strengthen further the policy formulation process, it might perhaps be useful to establish a small advisory think-tank composed of the best experts from within and outside the Office which would analyze, foresee and identify options for action. It would of course be for the High Commissioner to determine the terms of reference of such a body, which might include for example the past, present and future chairmen of the Executive Committee. To enable the Executive Committee to hold a proper debate on all those matters, consideration might be given to recommending an extension of its session, so that there would be time between the general debate and the adoption of decisions to consider a whole series of questions, as had been the case in the past. Perhaps the Executive Committee itself should set up an informal open-ended group of donor and asylum States which would meet periodically at the level of head of delegation or mission to consider the inputs of member States in advance of the meetings of the two subcommittees of the Executive Committee.

GENERAL DEBATE (agenda item 4)

38. Mrs. OGATA (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) welcomed all the participants, in particular the delegation of Spain, which was now a member of the Executive Committee. After having thanked the outgoing Chairman, she congratulated the newly elected Chairman and members of the Bureau, noting that the Executive Committee had made a wise choice in electing as Chairman the representative of a country which had generously provided asylum to millions of refugees.

39. The presence at the forty-fifth session of the Executive Committee of Ms. Catherine Bertini, Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), was testimony of the indispensable contribution of WFP to refugee assistance and to the commitment of UNHCR to strengthen their partnership even further. The need for such partnership had rarely been greater. The progress towards peace in the Middle East and the birth of a democratic South Africa had been among the rare signs of hope in a year too often marked by genocide, ethnic conflict and resurgent violence. To provide protection and assistance to all uprooted persons, whose number was increasing throughout the world, was becoming increasingly difficult, and the solutions to their plight seemed ever more elusive. The fate of the uprooted, whether they had moved to a country of asylum or were displaced in their own land, had become tangled with geopolitical realities.

40. In the United Nations a genuine symbiosis was developing between political initiatives and development activities on the one hand and humanitarian operations on the other; that was hardly surprising since the success of one was linked to the performance of the other. Situated halfway between peace and war, between relief and development, humanitarian action must retain its integrity, neutrality and impartiality, and its objective must remain the protection and well-being of the victims of war, violence and persecution.

41. Amidst political instability and economic uncertainty, protection remained the essence of the UNHCR humanitarian challenge; she would outline the contours and emphasize the constraints of that challenge by describing the quality of the protection of refugees abroad and on their return to their country of origin, the links between protection and solutions, the prevention of refugee flows, and the need for greater commitment, cooperation and capacity.

42. With regard to the protection of refugees abroad, the crisis in Rwanda had highlighted the very serious protection problems inherent in large-scale emergencies. Some two million refugees had fled the areas ravaged by the war. Although the human toll had been too high, it would probably have been even higher without the generosity of the peoples of Zaire and the United Republic of Tanzania and the remarkable work done by NGOs, the personnel sent by the Governments of donor countries, and the United Nations humanitarian agencies. More than 220 international staff had been deployed in the UNHCR assistance operation. The situation had stabilized in Tanzania and Rwanda, and although enormous difficulties remained in Uvira and Bukavu, things were going better in Goma.

43. In that region the security problems had seriously threatened the capacity of the asylum countries to protect the refugees. In Burundi, both refugees and repatriated persons had been endangered by political and ethnic tensions. In

August just past a UNHCR field officer had been killed in northern Burundi. She hoped that the convention signed by the Burundi political parties on 10 September 1994 would soon lead to the formation of a new Government which could reduce the tensions.

44. The violence which had gripped Rwanda had spread to the refugee camps in eastern Zaire and in Tanzania. Elements of the former Rwandese army and militia were threatening refugees and humanitarian workers, disrupting the delivery of relief and essential services with the apparent aim of controlling the refugees, blocking their return to Rwanda, and building resistance against the Government in Kigali. UNHCR was very worried about the situation and had urged that all the armed elements should immediately be removed from the camps. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General had also held talks on the subject with the authorities in Zaire.

45. The problem of insecurity in refugee camps was not unique to the Rwanda crisis; it occurred, unfortunately, in many other countries. Herded together in overcrowded camps in remote areas which were outside the effective control of any Government and where weapons were freely available, the refugees, first and foremost the women and children, were exposed to great risks. UNHCR had tried to make a difference by intervening very early, relieving the congestion in the camps and locating them in safer areas, while giving greater attention to the needs of women refugees and providing training and support for government officials. But, as the Executive Committee had repeatedly affirmed, it was primarily for the country of asylum to ensure the personal security of refugees, maintain the exclusively civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps, and prevent armed bands from coming to threaten them. While those principles were generally accepted, the political will and, more importantly, the capacity to implement them were often lacking. The international community must urgently examine how it could assist asylum countries to take the necessary action to improve security in refugee camps.

46. While in some countries it was the quality of asylum which had suffered, in others it was asylum itself which had become more difficult to obtain. She was grateful to those countries which, despite their economic difficulties, had continued generously to receive refugees; she was aware of the burden which the presence of refugees represented for such countries and had pressed for greater assistance for them. She was also concerned about the growing reluctance of many States to keep their borders open.

47. Except in Western Europe where asylum applications had steadily declined from 700,000 in 1992 to about 550,000 in 1993, the numbers of persons seeking asylum were on the rise. In the face of persecution, war and violence, the right of asylum must continue to be upheld. Asylum was not necessarily synonymous with an enduring solution. More often than not it was an interim measure which bought time for solutions. UNHCR had sought to stress the temporary nature of asylum in an effort to broaden its availability. That had been the reasoning behind the "safe haven" concept which UNHCR had urged for Haitian asylum-seekers so that they might be given temporary refuge.

48. The concept of temporary protection had also been applied to refugees from the former Yugoslavia. By providing immediate safety for victims of war and emphasizing eventual return to their country of origin, that formula addressed the needs of individuals as well as the concerns of States. With ever growing

numbers in need of international protection, the international community must study the possibility of wider and more consistent application of temporary protection. In a changing world, resettlement remained an important tool of protection. She expressed her gratitude to countries which continued to provide resettlement places for refugees. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the OAU Refugees Convention and on the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Cartagena Declaration, it would be opportune to examine the lessons of the broader protection offered by those regional instruments.

49. There was an inherent link between protection and solutions. Frequently, the availability to refugees of protection abroad was affected by the possibility of solutions at home. Nor could solutions be sustained if the conflict and violence which had provoked the exodus continued and if the security of the returnees was not assured. That was why the search for solutions to refugee problems was a question which went beyond the strictly humanitarian framework and depended deeply on political initiatives. Thus, the peace process in Mozambique had encouraged more than a million refugees to return home. The positive developments in the Middle East might bring forth humanitarian solutions. If called upon, the Office would play a role, in line with its terms of reference and in cooperation with other organizations, in the action which might be taken.

50. Over 100,000 Myanmar refugees in Bangladesh had registered for repatriation, and the pace of returns had significantly accelerated. She welcomed as well the continued dialogue between the Governments of Bhutan and Nepal and she would like to initiate discussions with each of them on modalities for implementing solutions for the 80,000 persons in the camps in Nepal. In Liberia, Mali and Somalia, however, the return of violence had compromised the prospects for solutions. In Afghanistan, too, the intensified fighting in Kabul and elsewhere in the country meant that the situation of the 2.5 million returnees remained extremely precarious. The number of returnees to Afghanistan had never been lower since the operation began in 1990. There were still some 3.3 million Afghan refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran and in Pakistan. It was also difficult to predict what would happen in the former Yugoslavia. UNHCR was watching developments closely since they, together with donor support, determined the course of its own operation. Unless the Office received the funds which it needed, it would have to cut back its activities.

51. In every repatriation operation, security and the political commitment and capacity of the country of origin to provide it were critical factors. If those who returned to their country did not feel that their life and liberty were safe, then repatriation, far from bringing about a solution, might actually precipitate another outflow. That was why UNHCR emphasized the need to create an environment of confidence and security in Rwanda and had followed a cautious policy on repatriation. As Cambodia and El Salvador had shown, a greater human rights role for the United Nations could do much to restore confidence in such situations. Urgent financial and personnel support should be given to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in his efforts to deploy human rights monitors in Rwanda. Furthermore, UNHCR stood ready to support any initiatives for the reconciliation of a society traumatised by ethnic killings on a genocidal scale.

52. She welcomed the decision by the General Assembly to send a human rights verification mission to Guatemala and wished every success to Mr. Franco,

currently the UNHCR Director of International Protection, who had been appointed by the Secretary-General to lead the mission. If yesterday's repatriation was not to become tomorrow's emergency, then the international community must show greater commitment to post-conflict rehabilitation. The fragility of Cambodia was disturbing. Another source of disappointment for UNHCR was that the international community did not seem interested in the consolidation of the Office's activities in Tajikistan. To offer sustainable solutions was one of the Office's major concerns.

53. In an effort to assist communities which received returnees UNHCR had both widened the application of its community-based micro-projects (QIPs - "quick impact projects") from Mozambique to Myanmar and had also deepened its understanding of them as a means of reintegration. But such efforts could only be meaningful if they were placed in a larger framework of national rehabilitation, economic and social development and democratization of war-torn countries such as Mozambique. To that end, UNHCR had sought to forge new alliances with development and financial institutions. Those efforts had begun to pay some dividends, with grants from the World Bank, the African Development Bank and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The IFAD grant would enable the Office to assist countries such as the United Republic of Tanzania to make good the environmental damage caused by the refugees in its territory.

54. A comprehensive approach must be taken to protection, solutions and prevention. Increasingly, movements of refugees were becoming part of larger and more complex movements of people, and neither the solution nor the prevention of refugee problems could be effectively promoted without addressing the plight of the internally displaced. Within the limits of its mandate and resources UNHCR therefore remained willing to assume responsibility for the internally displaced, provided that there was a close link to an existing or potential refugee problem, as in Georgia, Tajikistan and Sri Lanka. That position was in fact in line with the conclusion which the Executive Committee had adopted on the subject at its previous session, which had been endorsed by the General Assembly. In Rwanda UNHCR was assisting internally displaced persons within the framework of the United Nations emergency relief operation. Such activities were concentrated in the south-west of the country and had undoubtedly helped to prevent a further outflow.

55. UNHCR was aware of the enormous scale of the humanitarian problem in the countries of origin and supported a division of labour within a clear structure. However, in carving out responsibilities, the United Nations must remain sensitive to the fundamental protection needs of the victims and to the UNHCR protection mandate, if the goal was viable solutions.

56. Just as protection was linked to solutions, so too solutions and prevention were two sides of the same coin. They demanded a more comprehensive effort to attack the causes which forced people to flee, as had been done in the CIREFCA process in Central America which had been successfully completed in June 1994. The Comprehensive Plan of Action for Indo-Chinese Refugees had also helped to stem the flow from Viet Nam. UNHCR requested the countries of the region to make every effort to carry out the Plan by the end of 1995.

57. Where Europe was concerned, she had frequently advocated a regional and comprehensive approach. Particularly in the former Soviet Union, ethnic

tensions aggravated by political and economic restructuring were forcing people to leave. UNHCR had initially restricted itself to traditional protection activities but had now expanded the scope to emergency-management training and capacity-building in Russia and other countries, assisting refugees and displaced persons in the Caucasus, organizing the safe and voluntary return of displaced persons in Georgia, etc.

58. Piecemeal approaches were not the answer to the diversity and complexity of the challenges in that part of the world. The request of the Russian Government that UNHCR should initiate a comprehensive strategy for the region was therefore encouraging. Consultations had been undertaken with the Governments of the countries concerned and the competent organizations on preparations for an international meeting in 1995. But it must be clearly borne in mind that a regional strategy, whether in that part of the world or elsewhere, could succeed only if the Governments of the region gave their unequivocal support, for that was a sine qua non of a contribution by the international community.

59. UNHCR could not act in isolation in the protection of refugees and resolution of their problems. Its action must be part of a global strategy for international peace and security, human rights and economic and social development throughout the world. But that imposed new pressures and constraints on the Office which reduced its humanitarian space. How was it to defend the rights of the victims? It was not only human lives which were at stake. Peace and progress were also the victims of humanitarian disasters. If the humanitarian mandate of UNHCR was to be safeguarded, several conditions must be met: increased commitment by the international community, intensified cooperation, greater transparency, and strengthening of capacity.

60. Firstly, Governments must commit themselves to the basic humanitarian principles of impartiality and neutrality. Respect for those principles was essential to the credibility of humanitarian action and thus to the Office's ability to protect people and find solutions to their plight. By building trust among the victims UNHCR could go where peace-keeping forces could not; it could buy time for political action and contribute to reconciliation. The political and moral support of the members of the Executive Committee were essential to the discharge of the Office's distinct humanitarian mandate.

61. UNHCR also needed the financial support of the Executive Committee. Funding had certainly become more regular. The growing and significant support of the European Community's Humanitarian Office was particularly welcome. However, UNHCR still needed at least $US 325 million in net contributions in order to reach its budgetary target of $US 1.3 billion for 1994. It hoped that the attention which donors were giving to the Rwanda/Burundi crisis would be sustained because funds would still be needed for some time in order to cope with the refugee problem in that region. But the needs elsewhere must not be overlooked. Additional resources were required to complete the operation in Mozambique. For Guatemala, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan, UNHCR had received only half of the necessary funds.

62. The Office must also intensify its cooperation with international and non-governmental organizations. The presence at the meeting of Ms. Bertini, Executive Director of WFP, indicated the Office's deepening collaboration with that agency. It was also expanding its cooperation with the International

Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in conflict situations and it was working with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to give concrete form to their partnership in the field. It was also collaborating with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to help refugee children. Aware that cooperation was not a luxury but a necessity, UNHCR had launched in 1993 the "partnership in action" (PARinAC) process. Everyone must now work to implement the recommendations adopted at the Oslo Conference, particularly in the area of capacity-building and training of local NGOs.

63. Partnerships were most successful when built on complementarity of mandates and expertise. It was therefore essential for everybody's role and responsibilities to be clearly defined. Given the interactions between the political, military and humanitarian mandates established with the framework of the multifaceted operations of the United Nations, it was essential for all the actors to understand and respect each other's mandate, role and responsibilities. The structures must be established early. Relief must be coordinated, but the Office's protection mandate should be respected. It was correct in complex emergencies for the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to allocate the responsibilities in consultation with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

64. Furthermore, capacity-building and management needed innovative approaches. For example, the influx of refugees into Goma had been so great that UNHCR had had to search for innovative means of building capacity. That had given birth to the idea of "service packages", under which donor Governments had provided funds, facilities and services in sectors where the capacity of UNHCR and its partners had been overwhelmed. UNHCR was also actively examining the different ways of using military support in a civilian-controlled multilateral humanitarian operation. Military forces could for example intervene on an ad hoc basis but decisively in strengthening the Office's response capacity.

65. She wished to pay a special tribute to the staff of UNHCR and its partners who had risked and sometimes lost their lives in situations of conflict in the past year. In that connection and in accordance with the undertaking which it had given, UNHCR had introduced a career management system which, together with other reforms, should equip it with the human resources management system which it needed and the staff deserved. It was to be hoped that the humanitarian personnel of the United Nations and of its NGO partners would be included within the scope of the draft convention on the safety of United Nations staff and related personnel which was being discussed at Headquarters in New York.

66. Management was also about new ideas and methods. Accordingly, UNHCR must access the wide range of thinking in academic and policy-research circles. It had taken an active part in the International Conference on Population and Development and would have much to say at the international conferences on social development in Copenhagen and on women in Beijing, the themes of which were closely linked to the dynamics of displacement. In order to strengthen the Office's capacity for strategic thinking and planning, she intended to create a policy-planning function in UNHCR at a senior management level and link it with the operational sectors. It would be necessary at the same time to enhance the Office's ability to monitor the quality of its management, and she had proposed the creation of an inspection and evaluation service which would report directly

to her. Lastly, in order to broaden the Office's external perspectives, she had extended a personal invitation to a small group of eminent non-governmental personalities representing a broad spectrum of contemporary society to meet with her informally twice a year during her term of office. The purpose of such an exchange of ideas was to gain a better understanding of the global context in which humanitarian crises emerged and must be resolved.

67. In response to the diversity and increasing number of humanitarian crises, the budget and staff of UNHCR had doubled in four years and it had offices in 250 locations. In order to avoid the risk of excessive prolongation of humanitarian operations as ethnic conflicts spread and political solutions became more elusive, there was a need to devise a plan of action and complement the agendas for peace and for development with an agenda for humanitarian action. She knew that she could count on the support of the States members of the Executive Committee in carrying out the UNHCR mission.

68. Ms. BERTINI (Executive Director of the World Food Programme) said that 20 million people were today being supported by the combined efforts of UNHCR and WFP. WFP had diversified dramatically since its founding in 1963. During its first 10 years it had handled almost exclusively development projects, but now its refugee and emergency work accounted for almost 70% of expenditure. As a result of the joint intervention of UNHCR and WFP, millions of people had been repatriated in Cambodia, Afghanistan, Iran, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Burundi, Rwanda, Mozambique and elsewhere; in the former Yugoslavia more than four million refugees and displaced persons were being assisted in the conflict areas; important rehabilitation programmes were being operated in many countries, including Mozambique, Somalia and even Rwanda; and emergency action had fed hundreds of thousands of Rwandese in the United Republic of Tanzania and Zaire.

69. Explaining the modalities of the partnership between UNHCR and WFP and the common challenges which they faced, she said that under their first Memorandum of Understanding, signed in 1985, they had collaborated closely in all phases of refugee feeding operations and that, over the years, WFP had become the principal coordinator and supplier of basic food commodities for refugees. With the sharp increase in refugee food aid and the growing logistical complexity of the activities, it had been necessary to change the modalities of operation: hence the signature in 1991 of a new Memorandum. As a result, since 1 January 1992 WFP had been responsible for the mobilization of all basic food commodities and for the funding of external transport and inland deliveries in virtually all UNHCR relief operations. Following the revision of the Memorandum in 1994, the management of food storage centres was now a WFP responsibility.

70. Recent experience with malnutrition among refugees had prompted UNHCR and WFP to decide that blended foods and sugar would now be categorized as basic commodities. In addition, groups of refugees numbering under 5,000 would be taken in hand by UNHCR, which would also attend to their feeding. The establishment of food aid availability status reports had now become a standard practice between the two organizations. They had also agreed to collaborate closely in the elaboration of census and registration procedures, in the formulation of more specific requests to donors with regard to food needs and the funds to support those needs, in accounting to each other for the food and cash collected for each purpose, in the improvement of the development

programmes for long-term refugees, and in emphasizing the important role and serious problems of women refugees.

71. The two agencies had also decided to improve food distribution, to carry out census and registration procedures with greater accuracy and timeliness, always to clarify responsibilities in the implementation of each programme, to collaborate from the very beginning of each crisis, to cooperate with other bodies, including the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and all the NGOs working in emergency situations, to extend their joint efforts for staff training, and to expand the implementation of development and rehabilitation programmes. Finally, UNHCR had been kind enough to support the requests addressed by WFP to the donors for more funds for food purchases and logistics. With regard to the role of the governing bodies of UNHCR and WFP in improving their collaboration, she commended the Governments whose representatives understood how the two organizations worked.

72. Where policy was concerned, UNHCR and WFP must solve the problem of the issue of food to military personnel, ensure the protection of refugees against forced repatriation and against any military or other kind of action designed to prevent their voluntary repatriation, promote long-term development strategies, including schools for children, and constantly emphasize the unique role and problems of women refugees.

73. Mr. JELONEK (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union and Austria, Finland, Norway and Sweden, said that during the past year UNHCR had once again been confronted with unprecedented problems connected not only with the sheer numbers of refugees and displaced persons in the world but also with the increasingly complex nature of refugee situations and the resulting difficult working conditions of the Office and its staff. It was therefore all the more necessary for the Executive Committee to reaffirm the paramount importance of international protection.

74. The assistance and protection activities for refugees were being carried out by UNHCR in a world in transition, prey to an alarming proliferation of ethnic and sectarian conflicts. The European Union once again called on all Governments which had not yet done so, in particular members of the Executive Committee, to ratify or adhere to the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Additional Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, and the Union encouraged UNHCR to disseminate the principles of those instruments.

75. Violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, denial of access to people in need of protection and assistance, manipulation of humanitarian action by the parties to conflicts, and taking of UNHCR staff and other humanitarian workers as hostages continued to impede the organization's work. The European Union called on all parties to enable UNHCR to carry out its mandate and to facilitate its work. Since the outbreak of the Rwanda crisis UNHCR had been confronted with one of the most serious emergency situations in its history. The European Union expressed its appreciation of the rapidity with which UNHCR had responded to that human tragedy. The timely personal appeal of the High Commissioner had mobilized speedy and significant donor reaction. The European Union, through the European Commission and its member States, and the acceding countries had provided substantive and immediate responses through contributions in cash and in kind.

76. Since the beginning of 1994 the contribution of the States members of the European Union and European Commission and of the acceding States had represented about 45% of the UNHCR budget of $US 258 million for the Rwanda/Burundi crisis. The European Commission alone had made a first instalment of $US 100 million available. The Governments and NGOs of the countries members of the European Union and the acceding States had made a substantial contribution to the programmes in the areas of logistics, water supply, medical care, emergency relief, and site and camp management.

77. Of course, the presence of several million refugees represented a very heavy burden for neighbouring countries, but the European Union urged the Governments concerned to continue to provide protection and security for the refugees. Moreover, as the European troika which had visited Rwanda and the neighbouring countries from 28 August to 3 September 1994 had concluded, conditions must be established for the return of the refugees and other displaced persons in safety and dignity.

78. The human tragedy in the former Yugoslavia, at the doorstep of the European Union, was yet another example of the violation of human rights and humanitarian law. Despite some positive developments, the continuation of hostilities and ethnic cleansing and the rejection of the peace plan drawn up by the international contact group had dashed all hope. An effort to promote reconciliation was being made in the town of Mostar, which had been placed under European administration in 1994, but the recent attack on the European Union administrator in Mostar demonstrated how fragile the situation was. In the absence of a peace settlement, the need for large-scale humanitarian aid was obvious. In the past year, in addition to the sizeable contribution which the European Union had continued to make to the humanitarian programme in the former Yugoslavia, many member States and acceding States had provided refuge and protection for a considerable number of victims. The European Union remained committed to supporting UNHCR in that task. It also remained deeply concerned about other crises which were overshadowed by the events in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda, and it therefore thought that UNHCR should continue its programmes in all the regions concerned.

79. In complex emergency situations the protection of refugees called more than ever before for comprehensive and concerted approaches by the United Nations system and the international community in general, especially since such situations were marked by ethnic conflicts which often extended beyond frontiers, by mass displacements of unprecedented speed, by intertwined internal displacement and refugee flows, by breakdown and paralysis of the public authorities, by the need for protection and assistance in the midst of armed conflict, by attempts to manipulate protection and assistance for political objectives, and by the participation of United Nations peace-keeping operations in humanitarian programmes.

80. Firstly, it was time to look into the gaps and imbalances in the overall response capacity of the whole of the United Nations. The European Union recommended that discussion of a concerted strategy for improvement of emergency management should take place in a broader framework. The improvement of the UNHCR emergency response capacity required parallel improvements in other organizations. The Union therefore encouraged UNHCR to strengthen its cooperation links with other United nations bodies within the Inter-Agency

Standing Committee. In that connection UNHCR and the NGO community were to be commended on the achievements of the PARinAC initiative.

81. Secondly, it was imperative for voluntary repatriation of refugees to be organized in a comprehensive framework and, indeed, in an environment of reconciliation and genuine commitment to peace in the country of origin. In that regard it was the responsibility of States to enable their citizens to return home in safety and dignity.

82. UNHCR deserved commendation for its efforts to promote repatriation even in difficult circumstances and for the results obtained in Mozambique and Central America. It was to be hoped that the repatriation programme started in Myanmar would be successful. In the case of the former Yugoslavia, the Working Group on Humanitarian Issues of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia would help to determine a concerted approach.

83. Thirdly, the overall issue of prevention and early warning must be addressed comprehensively and as a priority by the United Nations system. As the crises in Rwanda and Burundi with their massive waves of displacement had shown, the traditional instruments of humanitarian assistance must be complemented by regional mechanisms to prevent further outbreaks of violence and allow the international community to establish timely contingency plans. A concerted strategy of prevention must encompass elements of humanitarian diplomacy, human rights, democracy building, social and economic development, and disaster reduction, to name but a few. Intervention by a single United Nations body was therefore not enough. It appeared imperative that agencies such as UNHCR should continue to integrate their mandated intervention and early warning activities into "comprehensive approaches". If an emergency occurred in spite of preventive efforts, measures of mitigation and containment of further escalation must be built into the immediate humanitarian response. Where the complexity of a crisis required monitoring and peace-keeping activities, they must be effectively coordinated with the humanitarian action, but without compromising its neutrality and impartiality.

84. Fourthly, the number of internally displaced persons now exceeded the number of refugees. The European Union remained concerned about the protection of that group and wished to appeal to all parties to conflicts to adhere to the principles of human rights and international humanitarian law. Of course in many situations it was virtually impossible to disassociate the protection and assistance needs of internally displaced persons from those of refugees. UNHCR was therefore to be commended for its activities on behalf of internally displaced persons and for its contribution to the discussion on ways of improving the system of protection and assistance. The "conclusions" submitted to the Executive Committee provided a sound basis for UNHCR intervention in that field. The European Union, Austria, Finland, Norway and Sweden encouraged the Office to continue its cooperation with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons, with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and with ICRC. They recognized the most valuable role which UNHCR was continuing to play for many internally displaced persons, but were firmly convinced that a comprehensive and concerted approach by the various agencies and organizations concerned should be established.

85. Finally, the physical protection of refugees, the provision of material assistance to ensure their survival, and the preparations for their voluntary

repatriation seemed increasingly interwoven with the political intervention of the international community. In the cases of the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, the peace-keeping mandate had been extended to the armed protection of humanitarian action. However necessary such protection measures might be, the neutrality and impartiality of protection and assistance for the victims must be maintained. The international community should not allow the humanitarian response in situations of armed conflict to become a substitute for political solutions, and peace-keeping operations must complement but not replace non-political humanitarian activities.

86. The primary victims in large-scale population displacements remained the women and children. The European Union commended UNHCR for its efforts to strengthen its capacity to respond better to their needs. It welcomed the report of the Working Group on Refugee Women and Children, which contained many pertinent recommendations.

87. Turning to requests for asylum in Europe, he said that the countries members of the European Union and Austria, Finland, Norway and Sweden were playing host to hundreds of thousands of refugees in accordance with the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Additional Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees and that the number of requests remained very high. They had taken several initiatives to prevent false applications. The aim of the European Union was to harmonize asylum policies and legislations. In a number of member States the reforms of asylum legislation introduced after dialogue with UNHCR had made it possible to distinguish more easily between the applications of refugees and those of economic migrants.

88. The Dublin Convention, which would come into force after ratification by all the States members of the European Union, contained rules on determination of the State responsible for examination of asylum applications and guaranteed that all applications would be considered. In addition to their obligations under international instruments, the States members of the European Union and the acceding States had provided protection, under their national legislation, to a sizeable number of victims of armed conflicts, mainly from the former Yugoslavia. Pending a peaceful settlement, they would continue that policy, on an ad hoc basis, in the spirit of the Geneva Convention and in close collaboration with UNHCR.

89. The Subcommittees on International Protection and on Administrative and Financial Matters had, as in the past, addressed a number of important issues and had provided a valuable intercessional forum for dialogue, information and guidance. UNHCR had provided excellent information for their deliberations.

90. The annual budget for the general and special programmes submitted to the Executive Committee showed that UNHCR had to respond to the needs of an ever increasing number of refugees. The proposed expenditure for 1995 currently stood at $US 1.13 billion. Through its member States and the European Commission, the European Union was the biggest donor to the UNHCR programmes; its total financial contribution, including those of Austria, Finland, Norway and Sweden, amounted to about $US 440 million. The European Union called upon all Governments to contribute generously to the proposed budget. As in previous years, it wished to stress the importance of broadening the donor base and sharing out the financial burden more equitably - an objective which had unfortunately not yet been attained.

91. The European Union wished to reiterate its grave concern about the increasing number of emergencies of ever growing complexity which required UNHCR intervention. The size of the Office's overall budget reflected those developments and provided a warning that humanitarian resources were not unlimited and that continued improvements in programme implementation were therefore indispensable.

92. Mrs. OAKLEY (United States of America) said that her country remained committed to cooperating with the High Commissioner and welcomed Spain as a new member of the Executive Committee. The state of the world's refugees had unfortunately worsened in each of the past four years. The number of refugees was increasing, while respect for humanitarian standards of behaviour and institutions continued to decline. As President Clinton had said in his speech to the General Assembly, the situation in Bosnia was yet another reminder of the ironies of the 20th century. A century so full of hope and opportunity and achievement had also been an age of deep destruction and despair.

93. Without a combination of political, peace-keeping, humanitarian and human rights efforts, none of the complex problems confronting UNHCR and other United Nations agencies could be solved. The lessons learned from crises must continue to be applied so that action could be taken, if possible, in time to prevent ethnic cleansing and refugee flows and the necessity for massive relief efforts. The endeavour continued to find specific measures to prevent emergency situations, reverse circumstances which seemed inevitably headed towards crisis from becoming catastrophes and swiftly to implement durable solutions.

94. One measure which all nations should support was the reduction of the number and availability of landmines. President Clinton had urged all States to conclude an agreement to rid the world of those often hidden weapons. Experience taught that refugees were among the persons most vulnerable to injury by landmines and that their repatriation was facilitated when landmine problems were addressed.

95. Furthermore, as a participant in a recent symposium organized by UNHCR and OAU had said, the need was not only to deal with the problem of refugees from tyranny but also with the problem of refugees from anarchy. Neither the Executive Committee nor the High Commissioner could alone solve all the problems. The Executive Committee must clearly define what it wanted UNHCR and the other agencies to do and must indicate how it conceived the coordination of their work.

96. The United States delegation wished to take the opportunity to announce additional contributions of $US 18.3 million to the UNHCR programme for refugees in Rwanda and Burundi and of $US 20.5 million in response to the UNHCR appeal for the former Yugoslavia. She had been able to see for herself in the field the magnificent role played by UNHCR in Rwanda and the dedication of its staff. United States NGOs had expressed their admiration for the way in which the camps were managed in the United Republic of Tanzania. The United States Under-Secretary of State, on his return from Rwanda and Zaire, had been full of praise for the international effort.

97. UNHCR had provided a pragmatic response in Goma with its innovative concept of service packages. The United States was proud to have been able to respond quickly and effectively to the High Commissioner's request. It had been

able to do so because of its military capabilities and will to use them. Although the United States had been a major participant in the UNHCR Sarajevo airlift, not since the operation in northern Iraq had its military worked with UNHCR to provide services directly to refugees. In contrast to northern Iraq, the operation in Zaire had been from the beginning a UNHCR operation, but rather than turning everything over to UNHCR, the providers of services in kind to refugees had worked in support of the UNHCR programme. All the participating Governments and UNHCR must try to refine the service package concept. The definition of the scope of the work should be expanded, the tasks subdivided to enable more Governments to accept responsibility for package elements, and more effective means of communication established among field offices, UNHCR headquarters, and the capitals of States. The new concept must be transformed into a meaningful mechanism for providing in-kind services in refugee emergencies.

98. The United States supported the Office's efforts to draw the attention of the international community to the needs of women refugees. With an eye to the World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, it was necessary to ensure that appropriate attention was paid to the particular circumstances of refugee women. It was true that it was difficult to protect women refugees, in particular against sexual violence, in places where they were deprived of the guarantees normally offered by social structures. The approach taken by UNHCR in the case of Somali women in Kenya should, with improvements, be the automatic response whenever women were victims of violence. In addition, an effort should be made to ensure that in every emergency situation food distribution was in the hands of women, in order to prevent the food being cornered by the strongest men. Where reproductive health was concerned, most women refugees would be satisfied with the services which had been available to them before they had been displaced. Another source of concern was family integrity, which was threatened by displacement; too many people, particularly children, were separated from their families.

99. The High Commissioner's programme should be designed to respond more effectively to all those concerns. The United States had provided the Office with $US 300,000 to support innovative programmes intended to address the challenges faced by refugee women. Rather than having only a handful of such programmes to support, they United States would prefer UNHCR to give an assurance that all its programmes would reflect the guidelines and the principles of people-oriented planning. The United States had also contributed $US 200,000 to the new UNHCR regional support unit for refugee children which was to be established in Central Africa. The unit would seek to implement the newly issued guidelines on refugee children. The United States hoped that other donors would also give the unit their financial support. It was also prepared to work with NGOs willing to implement the guidelines in their own programmes and which, in the spirit of PARinAC, could monitor the implementation of the guidelines.

100. With regard to management issues, the United States supported the High Commissioner's initiative of creating an inspection and evaluation service and a policy planning unit. UNHCR staff showed great dedication and for years many staff members had been doing much more than would normally be expected of them. The human resources of UNHCR must be managed in a way which enabled individuals to demonstrate outstanding performance and encouraged continuing dedication. The question of human resources management had been debated for several years,

and the United States was pleased to see that the Office intended to introduce a comprehensive career management system. Various kinds of measure had been identified: evaluation, promotion based on merit, training before assignment to the field, clarity in the delegation of responsibilities to field offices, etc. The system must be introduced incrementally and rapidly.

101. The United States placed a high premium on cooperation with other United Nations agencies and international or non-governmental organizations. UNHCR must not only perfect its own performance but also establish solid cooperative working relations with other agencies, including the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. The United States noted with satisfaction that discussions were under way with UNICEF and UNDP with an eye to producing Memorandums of Understanding of the kind which the Office had already concluded with WFP. A particular effort should be made to enable the people working in an organization to familiarize themselves with the practices of other organizations by means of joint training, secondments and periodic meetings.

102. The High Commissioner's notes on international protection had focused in the past three years on the changing circumstances of persons in need of international protection. The United States endorsed the statement in the note produced for the current session (A/AC.96/830) that it was essential to adopt new approaches and strategies and to adapt the tools of the past to the needs of the present. The High Commissioner recommended in her note that consideration should be given to guiding principles for the provision of international protection to those in need and not simply to those found to be refugees within the meaning of the 1951 Convention. Such principles could in particular address persons fleeing armed conflicts or other serious disturbances who were not already protected by the provisions of international humanitarian or refugee law. An outline of the elements of temporary protection might be envisaged in the principles and then used as a guide by States for the adoption of legislative and other measures.

103. The United States encouraged UNHCR to consult further with Governments in order to clarify the concept of temporary protection. However, any declaration resulting from such an exercise should not be viewed as a replacement for existing mechanisms for granting permanent refugee status to persons covered by the Convention; it could only be a supplementary measure.

104. It was essential to protect refugees against armed elements in the camps. It was the responsibility of the authorities of the asylum country to disarm refugees and separate armed elements from civilians. UNHCR should devise a forward-looking approach designed to protect not only the unarmed refugees but also the integrity of its assistance programme and the humanitarian workers in the field. Various regional measures had been introduced to protect those in need. The OAU Refugees Convention, which had now been in force for 20 years, had helped UNHCR in its work. The Cartagena Declaration, together with the CIREFCA process had guided the Central American States in the settlement of refugee problems in almost every country of the region.

105. Under the Comprehensive Plan of Action for Indo-Chinese Refugees, progress had been made towards solution of the remaining caseload of asylum seekers in South-East Asia and Hong Kong. That remarkable humanitarian programme, in which NGOs had been a respected partner of Governments, was approaching its end. The United States wished to underline the importance of continuing to work closely

with NGOs in order to promote the peaceful return home of the people concerned. It was clear that when nations could identify common interests and share problems, it was easier to devise mechanisms for providing international protection for persons in need.

106. Despite the difficult challenges facing UNHCR, the United States delegation remained very optimistic that the High Commissioner and her dedicated staff would be able to continue to meet the challenges of providing protection and assistance.

107. Mr. VALENZUELA MARZO (Spain) congratulated the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur on their election and assured the High Commissioner of Spain's support and collaboration. He also thanked all those who had welcomed Spain as a new member of the Executive Committee.

108. Spain endorsed without reservation the statement made earlier by the German delegation on behalf of the European Union. Over the past 10 years it had demonstrated that it was constantly trying harder to discharge its responsibilities within the international community. It would continue in that endeavour both at the national level and within the European Union and would seek to share its experience when it could be most useful, as it had done in the CIREFCA process, the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. It had worked together with UNHCR to adapt Spanish legislation on the right of asylum to the new needs of refugee protection. That would not be the end of such collaboration, since the new legislation accorded the UNHCR office in Madrid an important role in the procedure for granting of asylum. Spain had also responded to the Office's appeal in connection with temporary protection and would continue to demonstrate a responsible attitude of support and collaboration.

109. Action by Spain was not limited to governmental action. Spanish society and NGOs were also carrying out many support activities and making public opinion more aware of the world's humanitarian problems.

110. Spain was convinced that it would be able to continue its fruitful relations with the units which managed the UNHCR programme and, in the Executive Committee and other forums, help to find answers to the challenge, both to the United Nations system and to the whole international community, of improving as much as possible the capacity to intervene in cases of humanitarian crisis.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.